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New York

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Ms. Pereira (Brazil): I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman — and through you also congratulate the other members of the Bureau — on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this year's session of the General Assembly. Accept our best wishes and the assurance of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation. I wish also to congratulate Ambassador André Erdös who conducted the Committee in 2001. A word of recognition also goes to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala and his team at the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their continued demonstration of professionalism and valuable support for the cause of disarmament.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the New Agenda Coalition and the Rio Group.

The First Committee opens its work at a moment when security concerns are more dominant on the international agenda than they have been in decades. Disturbing signs of an increasing lack of interest in some quarters towards progress in the disarmament field within the multilateral framework still persist. We are concerned about a tendency to avoid the multilateral approach and to deal unilaterally or plurilaterally with what is, by essence, universal. Issues relating to international security affect all countries and require collective responses.

Given the need for stability and predictability, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are more appropriately dealt with multilaterally in a treaty-based framework. Internationally negotiated multilateral treaties in the field of disarmament have made, and will continue to make, fundamental contributions to international peace and security. It is imperative that commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation already agreed upon by States be implemented in full. We must pursue the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Terrorism threats have highlighted the importance of the total elimination of such weapons. The discussion of measures to countenance the possible use of such weapons by terrorists should not result, however, in any justification for their indefinite retention. We firmly believe that strengthening the non-proliferation regime does not by itself preclude the need for disarmament measures leading to the complete elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The supply-side control of key technologies associated with the development of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is an important tool for combating their spread. Nonetheless, non-proliferation alone is not a solution to our common security concerns. Without effective, verifiable and irreversible progress in the field of disarmament, there

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can be few, if any, sustainable results of non-proliferation regimes.

The continued paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is an eloquent example of the disengagement of key States and lack of the political will to move forward. A paralysed CD benefits no one. For the fourth consecutive year we could not reach consensus on a programme of work. Although convinced that the Amorim proposal constitutes the best approach to reaching a consensus on the programme of work, Brazil is prepared to support other efforts that may contribute towards achieving that outcome. Under any circumstances, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is imperative. We must also intensify our efforts to resume negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

Brazil attaches the utmost importance to the preparatory process for the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As a first contribution towards a successful result of the revision process, Brazil, together with the other members of the New Agenda Coalition, presented to the first session of the Preparatory Committee a position paper that reflects our views on nuclear disarmament and the strengthening process of the Treaty.

Worrying signs of policy decisions and other initiatives that are not conducive to achieving the objectives set forth in article VI of the Treaty are a matter of grave concern. Brazil recalls the unequivocal commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Brazil deplores any attempts at re-rationalizing nuclear doctrines that may include the possibility of using, testing or finding new roles for nuclear weapons. Reductions in the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads, as envisaged in the Moscow Treaty, represent a positive step in the process of nuclear de-escalation between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Nevertheless, those reductions cannot be a substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, nuclear weapons.

Countries which have yet to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), particularly those whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, must clearly indicate their readiness to join the Treaty. That political sign is even more important, as the actual prospect for the entry into force of the CTBT is the only parameter guiding the setting-up of the Treaty's International Monitoring System. In our view the System should not be accelerated on the basis of purely technical considerations.

One of the most significant measures in the field of nuclear disarmament is the further development of nuclear-weapon-free zones in some regions. Brazil is committed to the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to the creation of new ones around the globe. Within this context Brazil and New Zealand once again are submitting to the Committee for its consideration a draft resolution entitled, "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

We welcome with particular satisfaction the announcement by Cuba of its decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty. These decisions contribute to the universalization of the NPT and have the important effect of now bringing all Latin American and Caribbean countries into the Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited area of the world.

The issue of missiles requires adequate consideration by the international community. It is a complex matter, with implications beyond security issues. The United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts, chaired by Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro, adopted a report that is to be a reference for future international negotiations. We expect it will be well received and endorsed by all Member States. While further refining and strengthening mechanisms to address the security concerns deriving from the question of missiles, the international community should bear in mind the legitimate aspiration of all States to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of space technologies. Therefore, restrictions should not be imposed on the unimpeded transfer of technology for the purpose of peaceful space programmes.

As we have mentioned before, multilateralism in the area of international security and weapons of mass destruction is facing new challenges. Changes have taken place. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has not remained immune.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is, in our view, a well-crafted instrument which should be seen as a model for initiatives in other areas. The CWC is a non-discriminatory Treaty. It provides convincing, impartial and legitimate means for verifying compliance. It addresses disarmament, non-proliferation and international cooperation in balanced terms. It is a Treaty that vows universality.

The OPCW achieved very significant results in its first five years of existence. We witnessed an impressive increase in its membership, which quickly grew from 87 founding members in 1997 to the present total of 145 member States. The Secretariat conducted more than 1,100 inspections in more than 55 States Parties. The OPCW certified the irreversible destruction of more than 15 per cent of declared chemical weapon stockpiles in the world. The organization promoted and strengthened international cooperation programmes for the peaceful use of chemical technology. That is a fundamental pillar of the CWC to which developing countries attach great importance.

Yet, after a promising beginning, with such impressive figures regarding disarmament, inspections, the promotion of cooperation and with a record of impartiality, the implementation of the CWC has faced serious challenges. Let us hope that the changes that took place do not affect the chemical weapons regime and do not alter the positive course that the OPCW has taken to date. The independence of that organization, created to ensure the implementation of the CWC, constitutes one of the foremost qualities of the Convention.

We can no longer continue to ignore the threats to security posed by biological weapons, and must work together to reinforce the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) regime. Negotiations on a verification protocol were abruptly suspended in July 2001. The Fifth Review Conference was left unfinished because it did not reach consensus on whether multilateral negotiations on the strengthening of the BWC were to proceed. For Brazil, there is no alternative to a multilateral approach. The outlook for the Fifth Review Conference, to be resumed next November in Geneva, is not promising. At the present stage, a failure to resume the Conference might give the impression that the BWC is failing.

The fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is among Brazil's priorities. We have been actively participating, within the framework of the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) to coordinate international measures that are urgently needed. For Brazil, the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in New York in July 2001 are positive. We now face the real challenge of implementing the Programme of Action.

Thanks to the early implementation of the provisions contained in the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, which entered into force in 1999, the main provisions contained in the Programme of Action are already in place in Brazil. We expect other States to implement it in full. There are, nonetheless, provisions that require further international discussion. Brazil welcomes the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on marking and tracing, whose report will constitute one of the basic documents of the first biennial follow-up meeting of the Conference, to be held in 2003. We sincerely expect that we will advance towards an international legally binding instrument that will enable States to trace illicit weapons.

Brazil maintains its firm commitment to the Ottawa Convention, keeping the focus on a relentless pursuit of the core humanitarian objectives of that instrument. Brazil reiterates its concern about the universalization of the Convention. Even though the overall membership has reached the impressive mark of 129 countries there are still key mine-holder countries that remain outside the Convention. We consider that it is essential that initiatives aimed at furthering the implementation of the Convention be coordinated, taking into consideration specific regional circumstances and priorities.

Brazil is proud to belong to a region free of international conflicts. Latin America and the Caribbean countries traditionally present one of the lowest levels of military expenditure according to information released by the United Nations. Defence procurement in our region aims basically at the replacement of obsolete material. The commitment of our region to peace and disarmament is reflected in a

number of regional and subregional instruments that attest to our common purpose of integration and development, as illustrated by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic.

The First Committee of the General Assembly has an essential role to play. This is a forum for expressing and creating political will. Let us hope we can show proof of the appropriate level of political commitment that is needed at the present historical crossroads. We need therefore to renew our commitment to multilateralism and look for multilateral responses to universal problems.

Mr. Sahovis (Yugoslavia): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We extend our congratulations also to the members of the Bureau. Your experience and skill will no doubt lead us to a successful completion of the Committee's deliberations at the current session.

The maintenance of international peace and security acquired a new meaning in the wake of the tragedy of 11 September 2001 and the subsequently launched comprehensive international campaign against terrorism. Those tragic events demonstrated that terrorism had stepped outside national boundaries and that it poses a global threat to international peace and security. Multilateral action centred on the United Nations system can provide the only workable response to that threat. However, such an approach, to be effective, has to have concrete follow-up at regional and bilateral levels. With this in mind, Yugoslavia has placed the combat against terrorism, and related problems of organized crime and illegal migration, high among its priorities. We pay particular attention to these issues within the South-East European Cooperation Process, which Yugoslavia is chairing this year.

The agenda of the current session of the First Committee is again very comprehensive, reflecting the wide range of issues relevant to the United Nations disarmament efforts. In particular I should like to point out some of these issues. One of the most important foreign policy goals of my country is the strengthening of regional stability and security, which implies the promotion of good-neighbourly relations with all States in our region based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (in Europe/OSCE) and above all respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality among States. We consider that respect for those principles, coupled with the strengthening of regional cooperation, will significantly contribute to security in Europe and international security at large. In that context we actively support and implement the agreement on subregional arms control concluded in Florence in 1996 on the basis of article IV of the Dayton-Paris Agreement.

We also support the Macedonian initiative within the First Committee dealing with the maintenance of international security, good neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe. We hope that the draft resolution under this agenda item will be adopted by consensus again this year. My country also supports the initiatives related to the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

Another area of our special attention is the problem of small arms and light weapons. In that context, a regional clearing house for elimination of small arms and light weapons was established on 8 May in Belgrade as a project of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office. The purpose was to harmonize regionally the relevant regulations in the field of production, trade and stockpiling of these types of weapons in view of the fact that they are most commonly used in the acts of organized crime and terrorism. The centres would promote regional cooperation in the field of preventing the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons. My country supports all documents adopted by the OSCE and European Union related to these types of weapons. On a voluntary basis last year Yugoslavia destroyed a large quantity of small arms.

Yugoslavia duly honours its obligations assumed internationally in the field of disarmament. Since 2001, it has been submitting reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and has provided information on its defence expenditures on the basis of the General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments, which my country supports.

At the Second Review Conference on implementation of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional

Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), Yugoslavia supported amendments to article I of the Convention, as well as the establishment of a working group of governmental experts with the mandate to discuss the issue of explosive remnants of war, except anti-personnel landmines. Within this Committee we support the resolution that has been adopted by consensus for years.

Moreover, Yugoslavia signed the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. It took part in the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Geneva in September 2002, and supports fully the conclusions adopted at the meeting. As one of the States experiencing extremely harmful consequences from the use of these types of weapons, Yugoslavia has actively joined international efforts aimed at eliminating them.

As for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), we regularly submit reports on the implementation of the Convention and have received visits from the weapons inspectors of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Early this month, my Government signed two agreements with the Organization on inspection sites in the country. Yugoslavia expects that the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference for the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), scheduled for November this year in Geneva, will be brought to a successful conclusion.

We attach great importance to the issue of non-proliferation, particularly of weapons of mass destruction. As a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Yugoslavia supports the preparatory process for the holding of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which we expect to contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. Also, we hope that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will enter into force as soon as possible. In our view, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are the preconditions for long-lasting global stability.

In the process of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations should play a crucial role, since the proliferation of these types of weapons may endanger all achievements and values of humankind, and undermine the very foundations of international stability and security. In that connection, the United Nations needs to establish ways and methods that could contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation process.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you, Sir, that the Yugoslav delegation stands ready to extend its support and make a full contribution to the work of the Committee at this session.

Mr. Granovski (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the extremely high and responsible post that you now occupy. May I assure you and all members of the Bureau of the full cooperation of the Russian Federation delegation. We shall do everything possible to support you and the Bureau and to give our support to the efficient work of the First Committee and the General Assembly as a whole.

The past year showed that the world had not become safer and more secure after the end of the cold war. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States of America have demonstrated real threats and challenges to humanity. That year also proved that faced with such threats the world community should and could join its efforts and proceed with determination and deliberation. Our first successful efforts in jointly opposing international terrorism have proved that the principle of multilateralism has no alternative when it comes to ensuring international security. We know now, better than ever, that the clue to the problems confronting us in this area lies not in isolation, but in integration and equal security for everyone.

The principal task we face now is to transform the anti-terrorist coalition into a solid basis for building an efficient system of security and cooperation. The United Nations, which exists to ensure that the world community is guided by international law in its efforts to meet new threats and challenges, should be placed at the centre of this system. We would like to underline the fact that diminishing the role of international law and withdrawing from key agreements ensuring strategic stability, international security and the rule of law in the world order, are only likely to feed terrorism, exacerbate threats to international security, and weaken the safety of the world community.

Russia is committed to the strict implementation of its obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and supports its words with deeds. The period of strategic offensive weapons

reduction, provided for in the START I agreement, was concluded last December. Under that Treaty each Party was to reduce the number of the strategic delivery means and warheads attributed to them to 1,600 and 6,000, respectively, within seven years after the entry into force of that Treaty. Russia fully implemented its obligations under these provisions before the end of that period and, by the check date, 5 December 2001, had reduced the number of its deployed strategic delivery means — intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and heavy bombers — and warheads attributed to them, to 1,136 and 5,518, respectively. We destroyed the last nuclear warhead removed from the territory of Ukraine to Russia in October 2001.

Russia consistently and successfully carries out the measures that were announced within its 1991-1992 unilateral disarmament initiatives with regard to non-strategic nuclear weapons. Through our strenuous and continuous efforts, all the weapons of the former Soviet Union have been withdrawn to the territory of Russia and brought under steady control. We would like to draw attention once again to the Russian proposal to withdraw all nuclear weapons to the territories of the nuclear States to which they belong, so that we will be more confident of their safety and security.

The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, concluded by Russia and the United States at the Moscow Summit last May, is another major step towards nuclear disarmament. That Treaty legally binds each Party to reduce, on the basis of reciprocity, its aggregate number of strategic nuclear weapons to the agreed level of 1,700 to 2,200 by 31 December 2012, that is, it provides for a threefold reduction if compared with the level established under START I. According to its terms, START I will remain in force until 5 December 2009 and may be extended by the mutual consent of the Parties. Thus, the strategic offensive weapons of Russia and the United States will be subject to the double complementary limitations under both treaties, at least until the end of this period. The new Treaty provides for the further improvement, strengthening and updating of its provisions. To that end, a special bilateral commission on implementation is to be created. Russia will ratify the new Treaty by the end of this year.

Like any other agreement, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty has been made possible by the willingness of Russia and the United States to make mutual concessions and build new strategic relationships in facing new threats — relationships which they formalized in the Joint Declaration adopted at the same Summit — and to reaffirm the close interrelationship between strategic offensive and defensive weapons.

According to the decisions taken at the Moscow Summit, the elaboration of a system of predictability and confidence-building measures in the anti-missile defence sphere is under way. That will help to redress the situation after the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. To discuss strategic security issues on a regular basis, a special mechanism has been established — a consultative group composed of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers of Russia and the United States; they held their first meeting in Washington on 20 September. A similar mechanism is also to be created with France.

Russia attaches great importance to political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the problem of missile non-proliferation. We positively evaluate the work done by the Panel of Governmental Experts within the United Nations on missile non-proliferation issues. We believe that such work should be continued. When preparing the expert report, Russia introduced a draft memorandum of intent in the area of missile non-proliferation, which was to define further steps in that area. The document reflects Russia's concept of the Global Control System for the Non-Proliferation of Missiles and Missile Technologies which ensures the wide and non-discriminatory participation of all concerned States in developing such measures precisely under the auspices of the United Nations.

We think it is of crucial importance to take into account the opinions and proposals of all the concerned States when drafting the international code of conduct on the prevention of ballistic missile proliferation, which is now under discussion. An important aspect of the missile non-proliferation issue is to guarantee the legal right of each and every State to the peaceful development of outer space. The issue of preventing the militarization of outer space is acquiring more and more topicality. At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Russia put forward a proposal on a possible basis for a comprehensive arrangement on the non-deployment of weapons in space. Before such an arrangement is reached, the Russian side has proposed declaring a moratorium on weapon deployment in outer space.

These proposals were further elaborated in the Conference on Disarmament working paper entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal arrangement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects". That draft was introduced by Russia and China, together with Belarus, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe, Indonesia and Syria. It has received initial approval from a number of States participating in the Conference on Disarmament and, in our opinion, could be discussed within the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In order to make the document widely known, Russia and China have distributed it as a document of the current session of the General Assembly.

The fact that during several previous sessions the Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, resolutions on preventing an arms race in outer space is evidence of wide international support for this idea. When interviewed by the Russian mass media on 2 October 2002, Igor S. Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, declared Russia's willingness to take another measure of transparency and confidence-building in outer space, namely, to provide early notification of forthcoming space launches. We are distributing that information, together with my statement, among the participants of the First Committee.

We would like to reaffirm the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a key tool to prevent such weapons from spreading, and as a factor contributing to regional and global stability. We support the decision taken at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We encourage fruitful work at the NPT Review Conference, to be held in 2005. One of the most significant events that we would like to underscore in the context of the NPT universalization is Cuba's intention to accede to this Treaty and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We hope that that decision will influence the attitude of other States still abstaining from acceding to this fundamental document.

The recent G-8 Summit decision on the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction deserves special attention in the light of the necessity to coordinate international efforts to eliminate the risks of nuclear terrorism. It is also of great importance to enhance international legal documents on the physical protection of nuclear materials and the handling of radioactive materials and spent fuel. Russia urges the world community promptly to draft and conclude an international convention on combating nuclear terrorism. We would like to express satisfaction with the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in particular, the strengthening of IAEA safeguards. We support the IAEA project on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles, which is in line with the initiative launched by Vladimir V. Putin, President of the Russian Federation, to develop proliferation-proof nuclear technologies.

Russia regards the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as one of the basic instruments in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the safeguarding of strategic stability and security. The importance of this Treaty is confirmed by the Joint Statement of the foreign ministers of 18 States in support of the CTBT, which was made at the General Assembly on 14 September 2002. We appeal to all countries that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible, especially those countries whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. It is also important to adhere to the moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests and nuclear explosions of whatever kind until the CTBT enters into force.

We consider the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to be an effective tool to consolidate international peace and security. It is necessary to assure its universal character. We applaud the important decisions taken at the September 2002 session of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which now allow the Russian Federation to implement its commitments under the Convention in a systematic and consistent manner. We attribute the decisions taken by this authoritative international organization to no small extent to Russia's continuous adherence to its international commitments in the area of chemical disarmament, as well as to the specific steps to implement this complex and expensive programme.

We favour the continuation of multilateral efforts to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and are also willing to discuss the proposals that supplement and enhance the verification mechanisms of the Convention that were made during the second stage of the Fifth BWC Review Conference in November.

We would like to stress the need for a comprehensive approach under United Nations leadership to the small arms and light weapons proliferation problem. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to coordinate the actions of States to fight the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We attach importance to effective measures to be urgently taken by all States to strengthen their national export controls and to promote regional and international cooperation in keeping with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, adopted at the United Nations Conference last year.

We welcome the successful work done by the Group of Governmental Experts which, within the framework of the review process of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), is discussing proposals on further strengthening the CCW and its Protocols. We would also like to mention the new initiatives on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament that were proposed at the end of its 2002 session and which are aimed at unblocking its work. Russia thinks that this unique forum has great, though as yet under-used, potential. Russia has already submitted its own proposals on this matter and is ready to work further with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable compromise.

Emerging threats and challenges to international security, the topical urgency and versatility of modern issues of disarmament, arms reduction and limitation, and non-proliferation, are compelling arguments in favour of convening a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Russia supports the holding of such a session. The issue of international information security is also among Russia's priorities for the current Assembly session. Russia has put forward an updated draft resolution entitled, "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security". We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus as has been the case with similar resolutions in previous years.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Sir, the members of the Bureau, and all our distinguished colleagues, of the readiness of the Russian delegation to work constructively in the First Committee. We are determined, through practical steps, to prove our commitment to achieving the goals and tasks of promoting international security.

Mr. Mya Than (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege of speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Myanmar.

At the outset, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Our tribute also goes to other members of the Bureau. We, the ASEAN representatives, are fully confident that, under your able leadership, our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. We pledge to you the fullest cooperation and support of the ASEAN countries.

We welcome to our midst the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste, who have just joined us as the 190th and 191st Member States, respectively, of the United Nations.

The Millennium Declaration, adopted by the Millennium Summit, is of the utmost importance, reflecting as it does the commitments by our heads of State or Government. In the Millennium Declaration our heads of State or Government reaffirmed their resolve to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. During this session, we should continue to focus our efforts on translating these commitments into reality.

The ASEAN countries would like to reiterate that we view the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* as a very important contribution to the international community's efforts for peace and security. The ASEAN countries recognize that, in view of recent political developments, conditions now exist for the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. The ASEAN countries also reaffirm the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, of 8 July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to

a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. In this regard we, the ASEAN countries, intend to continue sponsoring the draft resolution, submitted every year by Malaysia, supporting this important ruling.

For a number of years, the ASEAN countries have sponsored the yearly draft resolution, initiated by Myanmar, urging the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. The draft resolution urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to reduce further the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems. It also calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

These two draft resolutions form part of the contributions made by ASEAN members to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other sponsors, will resubmit these draft resolutions. It is our hope that they will enjoy broader support and increased sponsorship. At the same time, I should like to inform delegations that the ASEAN countries also successfully introduced a working paper on nuclear disarmament at the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission, and our proposals, underscoring the elements of the above-mentioned draft resolutions, were included in the Chairman's paper in the Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament. Through such efforts, the ASEAN countries will continue to strive to accelerate the momentum of the process of nuclear disarmament.

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterate our call on the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. In this context, we welcome the convening of the Conference on Measures to Facilitate the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York in 2001. We are encouraged that, to date, three nuclear-weapon States have ratified this important Treaty. We also urge all States, particularly the remaining nuclear-weapon States, to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

We welcome the positive outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and note with satisfaction that preparations are under way for the 2005 Review Conference. The ASEAN countries particularly welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States Parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call again for the full and effective implementation of the steps set out in the Final Document. In this connection, we reaffirm our conviction that an urgent need exists for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT — in particular article VI on nuclear disarmament and article IV to provide technical assistance in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to non-nuclear-weapon States. We welcome Cuba's recent decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This will bring us one step closer to achieving the universality of the membership of the NPT.

The ASEAN countries note the recent dialogues among the major Powers and concerned States on national missile defence and express their hope that such dialogues will narrow the differences and bring new constructive approaches to address issues related to national missile defence in the interests of maintaining world security and stability.

We share the view that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner as a contribution to international peace and security. We note that a Panel of Governmental Experts was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/33 A to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We continue to believe that the concerns that relate to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. We note with concern the recent development pertaining to the START process and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty). We also note the signing of the United States-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions

Treaty as a step towards reducing their deployed strategic nuclear weapons.

We recall that the thirty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress that had been made in the negotiation of a protocol on the verification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). However, we note with regret that the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC was adjourned without any substantive results and that there was a lack of consensus at the twenty-fourth session of the ad hoc group on the draft composite text of the BWC protocol. The ASEAN countries regret that the group could not adopt a final report of its work. The ASEAN countries emphasize the validity of the mandate that was given to the ad hoc group and underline that the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally-binding agreement. We express our hope that the reconvened session of the BWC Review Conference, to be held in November 2002, will make progress in efforts to strengthen the BWC, especially by agreeing to hold annual meetings of the States Parties. We also urge all States that have neither acceded to nor ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to do so at the earliest possible date.

The ASEAN countries note the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, that was held in New York, and express their hope that the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference will be implemented effectively. At the same time, we regret that the Conference failed to achieve agreement on two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, that is, strict control over the private ownership of small arms and the prevention of supplies of small arms to non-State groups. However, we would like to underline the right of self-defence of States to the legitimate use of small arms to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the United Nations Charter. In this connection we join the call made by the Secretary-General to Member States to redouble their efforts to work for a ban on supplying small arms to non-State actors. The Programme of Action elaborated by the Conference is a first step in the right direction. We look forward to the biennial meeting to be held in 2003 and to the Review Conference to take stock of progress made and to consider further and more effective measures to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We express our preference for convening the biennial meeting in New York in July 2003.

We strongly believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, represented by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, are positive steps towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. In this regard we welcome the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The ASEAN countries, through sustained efforts, have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) entered into force on 27 March 1997. A Protocol is annexed to the Treaty for accession by the nuclear-weapon States. In welcoming the announcement by China at the ASEAN post-Ministerial Conference in July 1999 of its readiness to accede to the Protocol, we wish to reiterate our call to the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

We welcome the progress made in implementing the SEANWFZ Treaty and stress the importance of direct consultations between ASEAN and the five nuclear-weapon States. We consider this to be significant progress towards encouraging the accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty. In this connection we welcome the first direct consultation between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States in Hanoi on 19 May 2001, reaffirm our support for this process and call for continued consultations with the nuclear-weapon States. We also welcome the SEANWFZ and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regional workshop on the Strategic Plan for Radiation Safety, held in Bangkok on 11 August 2001.

We welcome the recent agreement at the expert level among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the text of the Treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The emergence of the Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone will further broaden the nuclear-weapon-free regions of the world and will contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also reiterate our support for the consolidation of the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia and for the

joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States providing security assurances to it.

We reiterate once again our support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We reiterate our deep concern at the lack of consensus on the deliberations held by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999 on its agenda and objectives. We continue our call for further steps leading to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States of the United Nations, as well as the need for SSOD IV to review and assess the implementation of SSOD I, while reaffirming its principles and priorities.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building efforts among the countries in the region. ASEAN has been steadfastly undertaking concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

We note the positive developments in the ASEAN Regional Forum process through various activities. We note with satisfaction the fruitful discussion and exchange of views at the ninth ARF and are encouraged that it has adopted a Statement on Measures against Terrorist Financing and has welcomed the establishment of an Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime as a specialized response to the challenge posed by international terrorism.

We are also encouraged that the ARF will continue to build on the concept papers on preventive diplomacy, the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons Register, and the enhanced role of the ARF Chairman as a means to further advance the ARF process and that it has welcomed the concept paper submitted by the United States of America and Malaysia as a good basis for the work of the new Inter-sessional Meeting. We also note with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the overlapping measures between confidence-building and preventive diplomacy. Over past years numerous discussions and talks have been held to enhance mutual understanding among nations to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. We will continue our strong support for the activities of the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are greatly dismayed at the continued impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and regret that it was still unable to reach agreement on a programme of work at its 2002 session and to start its substantive work. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome this deadlock and reach an amicable solution in the near future. The ASEAN countries believe that the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is necessary and we fully endorse the applications of Thailand and the Philippines.

We believe that the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority. We therefore call for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein.

Once again we should like to express our appreciation to the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa for their effective contributions towards international peace and security. Regional seminars and forums that have been organized by those centres effectively contribute to progress in the ongoing security and disarmament process in their respective regions.

We renew our commitment to multilateralism as an important means of pursuing and achieving our common objectives in the field of disarmament and our determination to further promote multilateralism in this respect. It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security and to redouble our efforts to live up to our commitment to the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. We, the ASEAN countries, once again reaffirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve these goals as a matter of the utmost priority.

Mr. Ben Youssef (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chairman, it is a particular pleasure for me to convey to you, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation, my sincerest congratulations upon your election to serve as Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to

assure you that my delegation will support you and cooperate with you in order to ensure that we are successful in our work. I wish also to thank Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his sustained efforts and important contribution to the cause of disarmament. I should also like to welcome the two new Members of the United Nations, Switzerland and Timor-Leste.

The new international context since the tragic events of 11 September 2001 has emphasized the importance of the role of the United Nations in disarmament and international security. Now more than ever we are aware of the need to reinforce the role of international law and enhance the respect of States for agreements and treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation and their effective implementation. We are also convinced that the international community must promote moderation and tolerance, enshrine dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, and reinforce solidarity among various peoples and nations. Far from any kind of clash or confrontation, excessive imbalances in society today, economically and technologically, will abet extremism, fanaticism and hatred. We must ensure here in the United Nations that we do not in any way inflame such mindsets. Tunisia has always considered that the arms race is being carried out at the cost of the most elementary needs of our peoples and their development. It is a matter of priority for us to reorient the resources devoted to military purposes to activities that promote development.

At the Millennium Summit the international community agreed on important objectives in order to relaunch the disarmament process which had slowed down. In this context we wish to recall the unprecedented decision adopted by nuclear-weapon States at the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) when they committed themselves unambiguously fully to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with article VI. The adoption in July 2001 of a Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was also important progress in multilateral disarmament. However, difficulties persist in the disarmament process. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has as not yet entered into force and the verification Protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has not been adopted either. The Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and yet it is continuing to experience difficulties in agreeing on a programme of work. Given this alarming situation, and until all nuclear weapons have been entirely eliminated, non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to benefit from effective guarantees against the use or threat of use of such weapons against the security and integrity of those countries that voluntarily have renounced nuclear weapons. We consider that it is high time that the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) be convened with a view to identifying ways and means to relaunch the disarmament process at the multilateral level.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, and the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction, are important ways and means to promote non-proliferation regionally as well as internationally.

With regard to the Middle East, it is one of the tensest areas because of the refusal of Israel, a nuclear-weapon State, to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear installations under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Many appeals from other States in the region, General Assembly resolutions on this issue, and States Parties to the NPT at the Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 Review Conference, have called upon Israel to do this. This obstinate conduct is an obstacle to disarmament and to the establishment of lasting peace in that region and can be seen in the unbridled militarism of Tel Aviv. Given such a threat, it is not reasonable today for us to base ourselves on a policy of two weights and two measures. It is unfortunate that the international community is swooping down on one country or another and suspecting it of holding weapons of mass destruction whereas another country, in this instance Israel, has an entire panoply of such weapons without even being looked at or inspected. We appeal to the international community and to the influential Powers to take the necessary steps to compel Israel to respect its international obligations.

Within this context we wish to welcome Iraq's acceptance of the return of United Nations inspectors. This is a positive step towards détente and the lifting of sanctions against the Iraqi people and will spare the

Middle East region from increased attacks or instability. We also welcome the decision of Cuba to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to accede to the NPT, which is a true contribution to the universality of that Treaty.

Aware of the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the effects it has on international peace and security, Tunisia has speedily ratified that Convention, which demonstrates Tunisia's commitment to eliminate this kind of weapon and to destroy the stockpiles of such anti-personnel landmines. An official ceremony was held which was attended by the United Nations representative in Tunisia. We do hope that the States Parties will participate in this process with a view to achieving the objectives of such a convention.

Upon the basis of such principles and beliefs, Tunisia is playing an active role in the various groups to which it belongs, in particular, the Arab-Maghreb Union, which for us is an historic achievement that is both essential and strategic. Tunisia has been active in Africa since the sixties when it contributed, and continues to contribute, to the restoration and consolidation of peace and security by participating in peacekeeping operations. We are also steadfastly working to ensure that the association agreement with the European Union will be successful, as it will provide an opportunity for cooperation and solidarity between the two shores of the Mediterranean. That will help to strengthen the partnership in the Mediterranean against any challenges that threaten the region, such as terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Much must be done to achieve our ends, but we hope that we can move quickly along the path towards promoting peace and security. The sole way, and the simplest, is that of general and complete disarmament. The death-dealing weapons holders must set an example. My country will continue to play a role in order to promote disarmament.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your experience and professionalism will undoubtedly be a valuable asset to the work of the Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. You can be assured of my delegation's full cooperation during the session.

Recent developments internationally have placed renewed focus on the urgent need seriously to address non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control issues globally. The importance of a multilateral approach to achieve these goals has also been reinforced. The heads of State or Government, in their historic Millennium Declaration, expressed their solemn resolve to, among other things, free people from the scourge of war and eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction. However, for a number of reasons, not much progress has been made in the disarmament field despite the gravity of the situation.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone for the total elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We welcome the outcome of the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which was held in April this year. We hope that further progress will be made at the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee. However, above all, it is important for all Member States to ensure compliance with agreed decisions in order to completely rid the world of nuclear weapons. We therefore hope that the nuclear-weapon States will adhere to the commitments made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to achieve complete nuclear disarmament. My delegation furthermore welcomes the important decisions by Cuba to become a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

My delegation welcomes the continued response of countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, the slow progress towards the early entry into force of the Treaty remains a concern, despite promotional efforts such as the Conference on Measures to Facilitate the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and other measures. The omission by key States to ratify the Treaty has the potential to erode confidence in this important instrument of nuclear non-proliferation. We therefore call on the remaining 13 countries required to ensure the entry into force of the Treaty to ratify it as soon as possible.

The devastating humanitarian impact of landmines was yet again emphasized at the recent Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Some parts of Africa have experienced

and are still experiencing the horror and devastation caused by these dreadful weapons. Countless numbers of people are killed and maimed, and the presence of mines also seriously hampers development efforts in some countries. We therefore welcome the progress that the world community has made in dealing with anti-personnel mines since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999. We are equally pleased with the outcome of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties where a number of measures and recommendations, aimed at the full implementation of the Convention and at ensuring its universality, were adopted. Only by a firm commitment from the international community will we be able to save mankind from this scourge. My delegation is also happy to note that all member States in the Southern African Development Community subregion have ratified the mine-ban Treaty.

The Conference on small arms in July 2001 and the adoption of the Programme of Action was indeed one of the highlights of disarmament last year. While the outcome was not completely satisfactory, significant progress was made in the matter. My delegation is happy with the commitment by States to implement the Programme of Action, as witnessed through their national reports on national implementation activities and compliance with Security Council arms embargoes.

The danger posed by conventional weapons has become even more problematic with the development of new and highly sophisticated technologies in the conventional weapons industry. Despite the urgent need to fight poverty and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, a lot of money continues to be spent on the production of these weapons, which create havoc and untold suffering, especially in Africa. My delegation therefore continues to support international efforts to promote transparency and confidence-building measures among States. In this regard, my Government hosted in Windhoek last June the United Nations Workshop on Transparency in Armaments. The Workshop was sponsored by the Governments of Canada, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands, and was attended by government officials from countries in the subregion. The Workshop succeeded in creating greater awareness and participation in arms transparency instruments.

This week, the National Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which complements the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Firearms and Ammunition, is taking place in Windhoek. The main objectives of the Conference are to raise public awareness and to encourage a national debate over the need to strengthen firearms laws and regulations, and their enforcement capacity in Namibia, in compliance with regional and international agreements and commitments.

My delegation appreciates the activities of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. They have been of tremendous assistance to the regions where they are located and help us to focus and conduct in-depth analyses of disarmament issues in relation to broader urgent global problems, which are on the agenda of the United Nations. These centres should therefore receive all necessary support.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its concurrence with the Secretary-General's appeal to rededicate ourselves to multilateral approaches to disarmament. That will also be the best way for us to address the threats posed by international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Let me extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and all members of the Bureau our sincere congratulations on your election to steer this important Committee. We trust that your rich experience and competence in multilateral diplomacy will help to guide the work of the Committee to success. You can rest assured of our full support and cooperation in carrying out your current mandate. We would also like to convey our appreciation to the former Chairman, Ambassador André Erdös, and his staff for the excellent work they did last session.

In associating ourselves with the statement made by the Ambassador of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), we would like to commend the great and relentless efforts that all peace-loving people throughout the world have pursued in the past year towards making progress in the field of international disarmament. The unremitting drive by the Non-Aligned Movement to give the process of global disarmament the go-ahead, is also laudable. The Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau, held in April this year, adopted a final document that set out its position and future direction on, among other things, the enhancement of international disarmament and security.

In addition, we welcome the signing of the United States-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, the so-called Moscow Treaty, a move that Secretary-General Kofi Annan called a positive step in the direction of nuclear disarmament. No less remarkable is the progress achieved by ASEAN in the field of political and security cooperation among its members and within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

In spite of the foregoing progress, the prospects of achieving complete disarmament remains bleak and full of hurdles. The unjustified stockpiling and development of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is continuing with no sign of ebbing. The military expenditures of Member States have also been steadily increasing. The fact that some major Power has updated its strategic defence doctrine spelling out new rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is of particular concern. That move obviously contradicts the negative security assurances that have been provided by the nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, on our planet lingering armed conflicts, acts of aggression and violence, terror, interference in the internal affairs of States, ethnic strife and civil wars continue to rage. These instances of instability have not only retarded the development efforts of the majority of nations — developing countries in particular — but could also induce conditions for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In the face of such a dangerous situation, it is vital for the international community to step up its efforts and do everything possible to address the root causes of conflict and ease tensions in the existing hot spots throughout the world. Primarily, efforts must be pursued step by step towards eliminating all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. To this end, due and urgent consideration must be given to the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It is also our delegation's hope that the ASEAN-sponsored draft resolution, initiated by the Union of Myanmar, on nuclear disarmament, will receive due support from Member States, especially the nuclear-weapon States.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore welcome all efforts at the international, regional and national levels aimed at reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. In this context we support the Non-Aligned Movement's call for an early international conference on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, representing a follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration regarding nuclear disarmament.

Like other Member States, we are deeply concerned about a potential arms race in outer space. That is due to the termination of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the so-called ABM Treaty. Moreover, the launching of a national missile defence system, in our opinion, could further the development of advanced missile systems and increase the number of nuclear warheads. It is therefore imperative for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to commence substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, we appreciate the efforts pursued by some major nuclear-weapon States towards the conclusion of a new outer space arms control agreement. We believe that, with strong political will and the commitment of all concerned parties, the outstanding disagreement on this issue will be overcome and an effective outer space regime will ultimately be established.

In our view the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should still serve as the cornerstone for the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It is essential that all States Parties, especially the nuclear-weapon States Parties to this important Treaty, fulfil the obligations provided therein. Our delegation shares the view that priority attention must be given to the advancement of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD) so that it can start its work on negotiating a convention on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. In this regard, we join other Member States in welcoming the decision of the Government of Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That reflects Cuba's strong commitment to nuclear disarmament.

In recognition of the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which contributes to the process of nuclear disarmament, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had deposited an instrument of ratification of the Treaty deposited with the United Nations in October 2000. This attests to our Government's strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and reflects our

aspiration to live in peace and build a world free from nuclear threats. However, in order to make this Treaty effective, we deem it necessary for other Member States that have not yet done so to follow suit, and call for the full realization of its objectives by all State signatories, particularly the nuclear-weapon States.

Equally essential for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security is universal adherence to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), especially its strengthening through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol to the Convention. Our delegation is also of the view that the threat of biological weapons as instruments of war and terror has highlighted the urgent need of ensuring the effectiveness of the Convention. In this regard special emphasis must be put on the need for all States Parties to pursue the objectives set forth by the Fourth Review Conference and to contribute towards the successful conclusion of the Fifth Review Conference to be convened in the near future.

We believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step towards the goal of global nuclear disarmament. As a State Party to the Bangkok Treaty establishing the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has done its best to contribute to ASEAN efforts in this respect. Yet, for the Treaty to be effective, the nuclear-weapon States must accede to the Protocol annexed to it. We therefore join other ASEAN member States in welcoming the announcement by the People's Republic of China of its readiness to accede to the Protocol. We also renew our call for other nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol at the earliest date.

In view of the above situation, evidently one of the most urgent tasks at the United Nations is seriously to work together towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. To accomplish this task we believe that no effort must be spared to get the disarmament process back on track. Furthermore, the root causes of instability and conflict, and above all poverty, ought to be dealt with in a more responsible manner. Only by doing so will we be able gradually to build a world filled with peace and free from the threats of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Marin-Bosch (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): This statement is dedicated to the memory of William Epstein, a devoted disarmament educator.

Mr. Chairman, to the congratulations extended to you by my delegation a few days ago, allow me to now add my own.

On behalf of the delegations of Indonesia, Peru, New Zealand, Algeria, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine and Mexico, I have the honour to introduce to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/57/L.7, entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", a study that is to be found in document A/57/124. This is a very modest draft on a very important subject. Draft resolution A/C.1/57/L.7 is made up of four operative paragraphs preceded by five preambular ones. The latter recall General Assembly resolution 55/33 E and reaffirm the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and the commitment of all to strengthen that role. The draft resolution welcomes the study and emphasizes the idea that "... the need has never been greater for disarmament and non-proliferation education, especially on weapons of mass destruction, but also in the field of small arms and light weapons and international terrorism". The draft also recognizes the importance of the role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The operative part the draft resolution expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for drawing up the study and conveys those recommendations for consideration by Member States, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the media. The Secretary-General is requested to report to the General Assembly in 2004, when the item will reappear on the agenda on the implementation of those recommendations.

As the Secretary-General notes in his foreword to the study:

> "Disarmament education seeks to inform and empower citizens to work with their Governments for positive change. I hope that Governments, the United Nations family, other international organizations, disarmament-related organizations, non-governmental organizations and others in a position to contribute will do their part to sustain the process of consultation and cooperation started by the Group of Experts, so

that disarmament and non-proliferation education becomes an integral — and natural — part of the education of the next generation."

What we have sought to do is nothing short of influencing the educational process of coming generations. To achieve that we shall need a collective and sustained effort by Governments and civil society, and all of this under the coordination and encouragement of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. It will thus be necessary for each Member State of the Organization to designate, within their respective Governments, a focal point for disarmament and non-proliferation education and training. The study was prepared by a Group of Governmental Experts, which I had the honour to chair. The idea for such a study came from the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and later became General Assembly resolution 55/33 E of 2000.

On the basis of that resolution the Secretary-General named ten governmental experts who met four times over a period of two years. Allow me to seize this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to those experts and to all of the other persons who contributed to the drafting of the study. Unlike the many other groups of experts, ours worked in a more open, transparent, and consequently more democratic, manner. From the beginning the expert group invited the various organizations that make up the United Nations family to designate representatives. It also established a working relationship with non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. That is why we met once in Geneva and also in California, thanks to the generosity of the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

After defining what is meant by contemporary disarmament and non-proliferation education and training, the study briefly assesses what may be described as the existing experience in that field. It recalls in particular the modest steps taken at the tenth special session of the General Assembly — the first devoted to disarmament — in 1978. The United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Congress on Disarmament Education, held in 1980, the United Nations World Disarmament Campaign, begun in 1982, and the fact that the United Nations has declared the present decade as an International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. It also recalls that the year 2001 was devoted to a Dialogue among Civilizations.

Chapter IV of the study contains a series of observations regarding education and training in disarmament and non-proliferation at all levels — the family, schools, universities, the media, the community, non-governmental organizations, governments, parliaments, and international organizations.

Given the constant changes in pedagogical methods, the study devotes a chapter to the subject, particularly the revolution in information and communications technology. The study stresses that disarmament is broadly focused on the need to reduce armaments, with a view to their complete elimination, as a means of reducing both the likelihood and severity of armed conflict. But it also examines, in its chapter VI, ways to introduce such education into post-conflict situations as a contribution to peace-building.

As already noted, it is imperative to have coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations with special competence in disarmament, non-proliferation or education. That is the subject of chapter VII of the study.

The eighth and final chapter contains a series of practical recommendations — 34 in total — for the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education and training. Some of these recommendations refer to steps that can and should be taken rapidly and at a relatively low cost. Others will require more time and more resources.

In a statement that was publicized today, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mrs. Helen Clark, referred to the outcome of the study that I have just been mentioning. She appealed, particularly to Governments, to do their utmost to implement the study's recommendations. "Please use them", she urged, "to provide guidance and strength in collective efforts for education about disarmament and non-proliferation."

With the contribution of all, the study could mark a turning point not only in the way the United Nations works but also in its ability to influence the lives of the peoples represented here. The experts who prepared the study opted for a different method of work and novel approach. For those who have been following the work

of the First Committee it is obvious that little is being done in the disarmament field. Rarely does one find a General Assembly resolution that has made a difference. The draft resolution that I have had the honour to introduce is one of them.

The Chairman: We appreciate the presence of the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mexico and his continuing interest in the disarmament field.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. Chairman, at the outset, the delegation of the Republic of Iraq wishes to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are fully confident and hopeful that our deliberations this year will be crowned with success under your wise leadership. I should also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election.

We are holding our meetings this year while the whole world is looking once again at the United Nations and at what it can achieve in the area of disarmament amidst huge international developments and invariables, some of which are dangerous and unprecedented, while others are positive. My delegation welcomes the decision by friendly Cuba to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That accession will enrich and universalize the Treaty and support the efforts made to bring about its objectives.

Like many other delegations, Iraq calls for the implementation of the practical and concrete steps to get rid of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in accordance with standard universal criteria applying to everyone. Among those criteria is the complete eradication of the nuclear peril in accordance with the steps contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. My delegation believes that we should face the present paralysis and stagnation that has surrounded the Conference on Disarmament (CD) since 1998 because of the lack of political will by some of the parties, which prevents the Conference on Disarmament from undertaking substantive work. In this context, the Iraqi delegation supports the principles contained in the proposal of Mr. Amorim to establish ad hoc committees to bring the Conference out of its present stalemate. At the same time, we wish to support the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

The holding of the meetings of the First Committee this session comes at a time of very difficult and grave international developments. Unilateralism and a lack of respect for international agreements and obligations have become among the main concepts of international relations, as is manifested in the recent position of the United States vis-à-vis the NPT and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). The United States has resorted to the threat of the use of force in international relations under a new name — under the recently declared pre-emptive policies — and has adopted new stances and doctrines which have replaced its use of nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence by its use as a means of international threat. This is reflected clearly in the report of the United States Department of Defense, entitled "Reappraising the nuclear situation", and by developing new generations of nuclear weapons with limited impact and tactical use for use against peoples and countries that do not possess such weapons. It is well known that such stances and directions contravene General Assembly resolution 56/25 B which states that any use of nuclear weapons will constitute a violation of the United Nations Charter and a crime against humanity. At the same time, it contravenes the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* and the obligations provided in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995).

Since 1990, my country has faced daily aggression undertaken by two permanent members of the Security Council, in clear violation of the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, in order to destabilize it and to threaten its security and territorial integrity. Those two countries have committed serious crimes throughout this period against the environment of my country, particularly by what the coalition forces used in 1991 — depleted uranium — a new generation of radioactive weapon that destroys life and the environment in which it is used for future generations. We were given the figure of five million years. In addition there is the chemical and toxic impact of such weapons, according to information contained in the warnings and reports issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The use of depleted uranium against Iraq has led to a sharp increase in cases of cancer, miscarriages, and the birth of deformed babies, particularly in the southern provinces of Iraq where such weapons were used. The use of such a weapon has led to an environmental and health catastrophe in Iraq, the impact of which will continue for generations to come.

This weapon killed more than 50,000 children in the first year of its use, in 1991. As a result of such a weapon, thousands of United States and British soldiers, as well as soldiers of other nationalities have suffered from what is called Gulf Syndrome, followed by the Kosovo Syndrome in 1999; and because of the seriousness and danger of this weapon and its impact on the environment, the Iraqi Government will resubmit a draft resolution entitled "Effects of the use of depleted uranium in armaments", which was adopted by the experts of the First Committee last year, and which requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of States and relevant organizations on all aspects of the effects of the use of depleted uranium in armaments and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly in 2003. Therefore, we call upon Member States to take up their historic responsibilities and provide the necessary support for the draft resolution, not just for the sake of Iraq, but for the future of humanity.

My delegation wishes to clarify some of the important issues that may not be known to delegations because of deliberate propaganda campaigns against Iraq. On the basis of the desire of Iraq, as it has already emphasized on several occasions, to prove its total commitment to the relevant resolutions, last month my Government declared its acceptance of the return of United Nations inspectors without conditions to ensure that Iraq is free of any weapons of mass destruction. We recently agreed in Vienna with the Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency, on the practical procedures necessary to undertake the tasks of inspection. Iraq now awaits the arrival of the inspectors to undertake the task entrusted to them on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The decision of my Government has come despite the fact that my country has been subjected during the last decade to the strictest inspection and disarmament regime known to mankind. It ended with the failure of the inspectors to find any evidence to indicate that Iraq possesses such weapons, other than those that Iraq has declared voluntarily. That matter is not known to everyone.

I also wish to draw attention to a fact that has been misrepresented. Iraq did not expel the inspectors previously. The Senior Inspector at that time, Mr. Richard Butler, withdrew them in December 1998, in coordination with the United States and Britain, as a prelude to the aggression that was undertaken in the same month against Iraq, in which the United States used more than 400 long-range missiles. The fact is that the inspectors were not withdrawn on the basis of a resolution by the Security Council, the Secretary-General or Iraq, but by the United States, which directly ordered Mr. Butler to do so. Since then, the United States has perpetrated military aggression without any mandate from any international organization and has used the most modern weapons and missiles against my country. My delegation is not surprised that those two States are now trying to impede the return of inspectors to Iraq, on the pretext of the inadequacy of the present inspection regime in accordance with Security Council resolutions. They are talking about illegal ways and means of changing the national Government in Iraq by force in a manner that contravenes the popular will of my countrymen and in contravention of the United Nations Charter.

Since 1998 and after Iraq exposed the espionage activities which have accompanied the inspection work since it began, the United States and Britain have continued to accuse Iraq falsely and to intervene in its internal affairs, in clear contravention and flagrant violation of international norms and the United Nations Charter. The media, intelligence and military organs have undertaken a campaign of disinformation, claiming that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that are threatening peace and security in the Middle East, while they know full well that Iraq is free from such weapons. Until today, they have failed to provide any proof of their allegations. We defy them on behalf of the international community to provide a single shred of evidence to support their claims. Time after time they repeat allegations without proof. Some examples of this are the claims of the American President in his last statement; the reports issued by the American Administration; the report submitted by the British Prime Minister; and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report, all of which claim that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. None of these reports provide any proof but are full of speculation,

allegations and claims. My delegation will circulate a response prepared by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry on Mr. Blair's report, rejecting all the claims and allegations contained in it. These allegations are merely preparing the ground for the perpetration of a new aggression against Iraq. We all know that from the mass media.

Here, my delegation would like to ask the following questions: Who is accusing Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction? If you really believe that such weapons exist, why then are you impeding the return of the inspectors and raising questions now that have nothing to do with disarmament? For all those who are sincere and understand the issue, it is not a matter of disarming Iraq but of achieving the political objectives of these two countries and of facilitating the execution of their regional expansion plans and of controlling oil resources.

Iraq has taken every means to put an end to such pretexts. It has invited members of the United States Congress, together with specialized technical experts in disarmament, to visit all Iraqi sites about which they have suspicions. Iraq invited the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, before and after he issued his report, to send specialists to Iraq to verify his allegations. Iraq opened the sites referred to in the reports issued by the American Administration and the British Administration in the presence of correspondents from the international press.

This hostile American and British policy vis-à-vis Iraq is an attempt to draw attention away from the real tragedy from which our country is suffering — a continuation of the economic siege against Iraq, which has no precedent and which has led to the deaths of more than 1.7 million of its people. Also tragic is the sabotaging role of delaying the implementation of the memorandum concerning the oil-for-food programme and blocking the provision of medicines and basic daily necessities to Iraq. In addition, there is the daily aggression over what are called no-fly zones, which have no legal basis in Security Council resolutions, as the United Nations Secretary-General pointed out in his statement, dated 27 June 2001.

The continued American and British bombardment of Iraqi establishments and civilian areas has led to the killing of our people. That is a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Charter. On this basis, we call upon the international community to undertake its responsibilities, on the basis of the United Nations Charter and international law, to put an end to such aggression and to lift the unjust siege imposed on Iraq.

Before I conclude, I must point out that the world today is trying to eradicate all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and that the Middle East is going through a period of instability because of the Zionist nuclear threat, since that entity refuses international appeals made to it to accede to the NPT and to submit its nuclear facilities to IAEA comprehensive safeguards. In fact, Israel attacked the credibility of the NPT when it attacked Iraqi nuclear facilities in 1981. That aggression was condemned by Security Council resolution 487 (1981) which called, unprecedentedly, for the Zionist entity to subject its nuclear facilities to IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

Despite that, the Zionist entity continues to stockpile all forms of traditional weapons and weapons of mass destruction and refuses to comply with all resolutions issued by the United Nations or the IAEA and continues its repressive actions against the Palestinian people who are trying to gain their rights and freedom and to get rid of the hateful occupation. Iraq thus emphasizes the fact that we should implement fully paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which provides for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya): I wish to add my voice to others who have spoken before me and congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the deliberations of the current session of the First Committee. Allow me also to congratulate other members of the Bureau, and to extend to you the assurances of the fullest cooperation of my delegation. I also take this opportunity to extend our thanks to Ambassador Erdös of Hungary for the manner in which he steered the proceedings at the last session. Special thanks also go to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and the staff in his Department, for their dedication and continued support in the furtherance of the work of the Committee and the course of disarmament, international peace, stability and security. My delegation has taken note of the comprehensive opening statement of the Under-Secretary-General.

The end of the cold war a little over a decade ago promised a world with less tension, a world more

united, a world in which cooperation would replace competition in global security issues. Such optimism has since been dispelled by disquieting new developments, including the continued reliance on strategic doctrines based on nuclear weapons. Tension and war continue to threaten many regions of the world. The spectre of asymmetric warfare and terrorism, with the possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction, has made all nations most vulnerable. The terrorist attacks without prior warning in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and the terrorist attacks here in the United States of America on 11 September 2001, which resulted in colossal loss of life and property, have prompted a call upon all peace-loving nations to act in concert to avert future attacks as unilateralism can no longer guarantee security in any country, however well armed.

No country can enjoy peace and security unless the same is guaranteed to all other nations. The world must therefore seriously address the root causes of terrorism, founded in despair, denial of basic human rights, poverty, hunger and marginalization. It is disquieting therefore that the post-cold-war era has seen a rising curve in military expenditure, running in the year 2001 to $839 billion, according to authoritative sources. In the years 1987 to 1998, world military expenditure increased by $7 billion in real terms, and this at a time when the majority of the people in the world are living on less than $1 a day. The world must wake up to the reality that security, stability and peace will be achieved through investment in human persons rather than in the sophistication of armaments. That is the sure path to meaningful disarmament and security.

No doubt the biggest danger to the survival of the human race is caused by nuclear weapons, either by accident or deliberate action. The present stock of weapons could annihilate the world several times over. Since 1959 the item entitled "General and complete disarmament" has been considered by the General Assembly in recognition of the grave threat posed to mankind by armaments. My delegation notes with appreciation the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on 24 May 2002. Although the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons agreed upon between the two nuclear Powers is very significant, nevertheless, my delegation notes that the balance still presents an overkill capacity. The Moscow Treaty therefore does not render the world any safer. The two principal nuclear-weapon countries and other leagues are called upon to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world, as called for in the May 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At this juncture, my delegation wishes to congratulate Cuba for the bold action it has taken to become a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We call upon the other three States which are not yet parties to the Treaty, namely India, Pakistan and Israel, to follow suit.

My delegation believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a key component of nuclear disarmament. While we are witnessing agreements on the reduction of nuclear armaments, it is worrying that some nuclear States continue to uphold doctrines of national defence and security strategy based on nuclear weapons.

Even more alarming is the possibility of continued nuclear tests to improve these weapons to fit the configuration in different scenarios of war. Such improvements can only lead to greater insecurity overall, as more, rather than fewer, States are targeted. In the end, such doctrines and postures are counterproductive and could lead to a new arms race as targeted States take countermeasures to protect themselves.

Although the year 2002 saw some interesting initiatives and deliberations in its sessions, the Conference on Disarmament did not agree on a programme of work. It thus is not carrying out any substantive work. Lamentably, this is the fourth year in a row that this has happened. The trend is worrying not only for members of the Conference on Disarmament but also for the international community as that is the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues. The Conference has an obligation to the global community faithfully to discharge its mandate and thereby contribute to international peace and security. Resort to the use of special coordinators is just an attempt to wriggle out of the stalemate, but it is not enough as such a resource is of limited use. We note that the stalemate has been caused by a lack of political will on the part of some major players. My delegation calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to refocus its efforts on the resumption of substantive work and not to waste resources on procedural matters.

Given the dangers posed by chemical weapons, Kenya hopes that the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be speeded up towards the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). My delegation has no doubt that the new Director-General of the Organization will inject new vigour. The dangers caused by chemical weapons in the hands of terrorist groups demand urgency in dealing with the matter.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted last year, was a big step in placing the matter on the international agenda, especially in the search for solutions to the grave problems caused by weapons. It is hoped that we can seize the occasion of the first biennial meeting to revisit the two contentious issues, namely, the provision of arms to individuals and non-State actors, on which the Conference did not agree. These issues have a direct bearing on the security of individuals, States, and indeed on international peace and security. Kenya wishes to express gratitude on behalf of member States of the Nairobi Declaration on small arms and light weapons for the support given so far in implementing the Programme of Action in our subregion.

In July/August 2001, the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs sent a fact-finding mission to Nairobi to assess the problem of small arms in Kenya, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. Contacts have continued since with the goal of supporting regional disarmament measures. The Foreign Ministers of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania held the first Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration on the problem of the proliferation of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the subregion on 7 and 8 August 2002 in Nairobi. They undertook to improve the coordinating mechanisms that will facilitate the smoother implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation, on behalf of all the States Parties to the Nairobi Declaration, continues to appeal for financial, technical and political support from the international community for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. We also call for strict adherence to arms embargoes imposed on certain countries at war.

Let me conclude by calling upon States to invest in the human person as opposed to more expenditures on armaments, as armaments are not the road to security, stability and peace. We call for the adoption and implementation of adequate measures to rid the world of the threat posed by armaments from nuclear weapons to small arms.

Mr. Al Khalifa (Bahrain): Mr. Chairman, at the outset allow me to extend to you my most sincere congratulations upon your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are fully confident that you will lead our work ably and effectively, thanks to your rich experience and great diplomatic skills. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

It gives me pleasure to express my appreciation for all the efforts made in the fields of peace, security and disarmament, particularly those made by the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat. I cannot fail to express my thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his lucid and objective introductory statement.

The efforts aimed at a reduction in the danger of weapons of mass destruction continue to be of major concern for humanity as a whole, in view of the deadly threat these weapons pose to the world. It is our hope that the countries that possess such weapons will proceed to lay down serious plans, backed by a united political will, in order to make the world a more secure and stable place. In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes Cuba's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We consider that decision to be a step towards the establishment of a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

Gravely concerned at the stockpiles of weapons that could annihilate the whole world, we fully support all efforts made to conclude equal and balanced agreements to reduce nuclear arsenals as a step towards their total elimination. A short time ago the world held its breath as the spectre of war in South Asia cast its shadow, for fear of the use of weapons of mass destruction in that confrontation. That would have a devastating effect on the region. It impels us all to give serious consideration to the need for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly if we take into account that the global military expenditure has exceeded $839 billion.

A major source of concern in that regard is the fact that the steps taken for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, remain agonizingly slow. Thirty thousand such weapons remain in the world today. The past year has scarcely witnessed any international cooperation in this field. In addition, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, have all been deadlocked in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force.

As a part of the Middle East region, my country attaches great importance to the situation there. Israel persists in its refusal to heed all the resolutions and the calls for rendering the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. It continues to reject any efforts made to that end. It is the only State in the region that refuses to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This intransigence cannot be in the interests of the region as a whole. The number of weapons of mass destruction possessed by Israel far exceeds its so-called defensive needs. Israel employs all sorts of conventional weapons against unarmed civilians, under the pretext of combating what it calls terrorism, but which is what we call legitimate self-defence and a legitimate struggle against military occupation.

It is our hope that this impartial world Organization will put an end to the war crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people who are struggling for the restoration of their rights. We hope that the Organization will apply its resolutions equally to all States, without double standards. We call for the implementation of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which calls for the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

My country welcomes all the efforts made for the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). Despite the fact that a Protocol on the verification of biological weapons has not yet been concluded, my country hopes that the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction will agree on a formula to review the Convention at their upcoming meeting in November 2002. We wish that meeting all success.

My delegation also welcomes all the steps that could lead to progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We particularly welcome the regional initiatives that aim at the elimination of that trade which fans the flames of wars and conflicts. When it is eliminated, all efforts could be devoted to the development process in the war-torn countries.

Last year the whole world witnessed the horrors of terrorism. While renewing the expression of our heartfelt condolences to the United States Government and its friendly people, we express our fervent hope that the terrorists will never have an opportunity to acquire weapons of mass destruction. If that should happen, God forbid, we would all be at the mercy of those who have no regard for life or humanity. At the same time, we stress the importance of studying and addressing the root causes of terrorism with a view to its total elimination. We reiterate our support for the prompt convening of an international conference to define terrorism and to distinguish between it and the legitimate struggle of peoples against foreign occupation.

Finally, we pray that the leaders of the world will demonstrate their united will to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and create a world based on security, justice, equality and peace for all. That way, a safe and secure life would be ensured for us and for succeeding generations.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.